

**First 5 California**  
**Comprehensive Approaches to**  
**Raising Educational Standards**  
**(CARES) Plus**

**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**December 1, 2010**

**EVALUATION**

1. Will the CARES Plus database be designed to furnish data for the Quality Performance Report (QPR)? Also, if you are going to use data to “conduct cost-effectiveness analyses of each program strategy,” will the database be synchronized with county budget reporting requirements so that it will help us break out specific strategies and their costs?

***Answer – No, the CARES Plus database is not designed to furnish data for the QPR. The QPR will collect data that is not already reported in the CARES Plus database. The QPR is designed to collect information from counties describing administrative strategies and successes; this narrative information cannot be collected in the CARES Plus database. (See Appendix M of the RFA.)***

2. What is the anticipated level of CLASS Assessment data that will need to be entered into the CARES Plus database?

***Answer – Specific information about the CLASS, including data collection and reporting, is forthcoming. Please check the First 5 California Web site for regular updates.***

3. How much will the required CLASS materials cost annually per participant?

***Answer – There is no cost to the county or participants for CLASS materials to support the evaluation of CARES Plus.***

4. Will the sample participants selected for pre- and post-CLASS assessment be distributed representatively across counties?

***Answer – Yes. CLASS assessments will be conducted for all participants in Component D and on a random selection of participants in the other Components (Core, Component A, Component B, and combinations therein). We intend for the assessment of participants to be representative across all participating counties. Local programs are encouraged to integrate additional CLASS assessments into their local program evaluation.***

5. The RFA indicates that there will be State-provided training for a cadre of certified CLASS assessors to conduct CLASS observations. Will this cadre be comprised of local participants?

***Answer – At this time, First 5 California is working to secure a third-party vendor to provide individual CLASS assessments for the CARES Plus evaluation at no additional costs to participating counties. First 5 California will notify participating counties when these services have been procured. Please check the First 5 California Web site frequently for regular updates.***

6. How will the pre- and post-CLASS assessments be conducted? Self-assessment? External evaluation?

***Answer – CLASS assessments will be conducted through the use of video recordings that will be exchanged between participants and CLASS-certified assessors. CARES Plus participants will be instructed on how to video-record their classroom interactions. A video card of the interaction will be mailed (via U.S. postal service) to their assigned CLASS assessor for scoring and feedback.***

7. Why doesn't CARES Plus include child outcomes?

***Answer – At this time, CARES Plus does not include a specific evaluation tool to measure child outcomes. However, CARES Plus will be closely linked to First 5 California's upcoming Child Signature Program, which will include specific child outcome measures. Further, the CARES Plus program is based on specific research showing definitively that when teacher quality is enhanced, there is a positive impact on child outcomes (e.g., there is a positive correlation between MyTeachingPartner (MTP) participation and language and literacy development outcomes, including receptive vocabulary).***

## **FISCAL**

1. Will Expenditure Reports be due twice a year or quarterly?

***Answer – The Phase I Planning and Development CARES Plus Expenditure Report is due July 30, 2011 (one-time submission). Phase II CARES Plus Program Expenditure Reports are due quarterly on the following dates each program operational year: October 30<sup>th</sup>; January 31<sup>st</sup>; April 30<sup>th</sup>; and July 30<sup>th</sup>.***

2. On CARES Plus Form 10, the instructions for filling out Budget forms 9A and 9B list table cells inconsistently with the budget forms themselves. For instance, the state reimbursable amount is said to be in cell B 13, but there is no B 13?

***Answer – CARES Plus Form 10, Program Operations Budget Instructions for Budget Forms 9A and 9B has been corrected; the revised form is accessible on First 5 California's Web site at <http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/commission/funding.asp>.***

3. The RFA states: "Payrolls must be supported by time and attendance or equivalent records for individual employees. Lead agencies and wages of employees chargeable to more than one program or other cost objective must be supported by appropriate time distribution records." Does this mean, for example, that our "Evaluation" subtotal must be backed up by a time study showing a breakout of program coordinator time for that activity? Must we attach contractor invoices?

**Answer – Yes. An agency must be able to document and quantify both time and dollars expended for personnel services charged to the CARES Plus program, including evaluators. These payroll documents are maintained at the Lead Agency's administrative offices and are subject to audit. First 5 California does not require submission of the back-up personnel services documentation with the contractor invoices. The reimbursement form will contain a certification by the Executive Officer or designee that the information provided is true and correct and supported by documentation maintained by the agency.**

4. The amount for counties indicates "up to" a certain amount. How would a county in Group C ensure the receipt of the annual \$150K allocation from the state?

**Answer – First 5 California has reserved the full amount of the posted county allocation for each county. A county may request at the time of application the maximum county allocation or an amount less than the maximum allocation. The amount of funds approved for a lead agency within a county will be based on the approved CARES Plus program application and budget. Once First 5 California and the lead agency enter into the formal agreement, the amount of program expenditures cannot exceed the agreement amount.**

**Consistent with the CARES Plus Program RFA, Section IV, B.2 Higher Match Incentive, any unallocated CARES Plus program funds within a county in each fiscal year may be redirected to support the statewide higher match incentive. First 5 California will determine the higher match amounts after all reported CARES Plus expenditures have been received and the overmatch percentage is calculated.**

5. The RFA defines a local public entity (LPE) as "county, city, district, public authority." Am I correct in interpreting this to mean that a non-profit public benefit corporation, such as a 501(c)(3), could not be the lead agency?

**Answer – Yes. For purposes of this RFA, a local public entity (LPE) includes "a county, city, district, public authority, public agency, and any other political subdivision or public corporation in the state, but does not include the State." A public corporation is defined as a corporation established for a specific public purpose by government, but with a large degree of financial and operational independence from the government authority that created it; for example, a municipal hospital.**

**Federal tax exempt status under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) is a nonprofit Public Benefit corporation and not a public corporation.**

**Therefore, an agency that holds only 501(c)(3) status is not eligible to apply as a LPE through the CARES Plus Program RFA.**

**It is possible that local agencies serving a common statewide purpose (i.e., Resource and Referral Agencies) may exist either in organizations that qualify as a LPE or organizations that do not qualify as a LPE. Therefore, individual agencies are responsible for demonstrating eligibility for participation as a lead agency for the CARES Plus Program.**

6. If a county First 5 commission doesn't apply in 2011, could they apply in one of the following fiscal years if another Local Public Entity doesn't apply?

**Answer – No. Counties must apply for CARES Plus by the application due date, since the CARES Plus program is funded in two phases and designed to evaluate a two-year program.**

7. Can Year 1 Planning and Development funds be used to obtain CLASS or CSEFEL training materials and/or attend trainings (e.g., CLASS, CSEFEL, etc.) prior to July 1, 2011? If so, what materials and trainings do you recommend?

**Answer – Yes. Phase I Planning and Development funds may be used to purchase training materials for all program years. However, Phase I funds may only be used for state-approved training for CARES Plus staff (not participants). Phase I expenditures may only be incurred between February 16, 2011, through June 30, 2011.**

8. Regarding Section IV - County Allocation and Funding Methodology: In Section B.2 (Higher Match Incentive), the last sentence says "there are no additional match requirements for this incentive." Since the reimbursement for the higher match incentive will not be sent to counties until after the end of the fiscal year, is it correct to assume that the money received can be used to support a Proposition 10 service unrelated to CARES Plus?

**Answer – Yes. The higher match incentive is intended to encourage lead agencies to provide a higher local commitment to the CARES Plus program. The higher match funds will abate CARES Plus program expenditures already incurred by the lead agency in the prior year for the purposes stated in the CARES Plus RFA.**

9. How did First 5 California assist small population counties in meeting the funding match?

**Answer – CARES and CARES extension legacy programs required small population counties to meet a 1:2 match ratio. In the CARES Plus signature program, First 5 California reduced the match amount requirement, which is a 2:1 ratio. This means that the match went from \$2 for every First 5 California dollar down to 50 cents for every \$1.**

## **PROGRAM**

1. The RFA states: "Local CARES Plus programs must offer support to participants to ensure that information learned through these professional development tools is integrated into all aspects of the participants' classrooms." What type of support does this refer to? How rigorous is this support expected to be? Are state dollars used to implement this type of support?

***Answer – The CARES Plus program, including core and component requirements, integrates education, training, and support to impact teacher practice and children's outcomes. Specific program support services are highlighted in the RFA. First 5 California does not require additional support to those outlined in this RFA.***

2. Is there a template for the Professional Development Plan and Professional Growth Activities form?

***Answer – No. Please refer to appendices E, K, and P for additional resources to support the development of the Professional Development Plan. Also, visit the NAEYC website for additional examples at [www.NAEYC.org](http://www.NAEYC.org).***

3. It looks like, in Appendix K, you confuse the Professional Development Plan and the Activities form. You should furnish the "checklist of acceptable areas (literacy, diversity, etc.) from which to indicate the training topic/course" for the Activities form. Or at least point us to where you specify the acceptable areas. The RFA states that the CARES Plus goals have narrowed, but past lists of acceptable activities were broad.

***Answer – Activities that can be addressed include accountability, data collection, data systems, evaluation plans, developing local consortiums, and corresponding Effectiveness and Access (E&A) Plans.***

4. Will the Core materials be available in Spanish?

***Answer – The only material available in Spanish at this time is the CLASS Dimensions Guide for CLASS training. However, First 5 California is currently working with a third party vendor to provide additional translation, and we will notify you when these become available.***

5. How will First 5 California address the availability of materials in other languages?

***Answer – First 5 California is currently exploring the possibility of translating some of the Core requirement materials, including the LAC video library, into Spanish. We also are pursuing the possibility of translating some of the Component A training materials into Spanish. We will notify you of progress in these areas as soon as information becomes available.***

6. Will the CARES Plus Technical Assistance include training in how to "infuse knowledge into classroom practice?"

***Answer – Yes. All of the CARES Plus Core requirements are aligned to infuse knowledge into classroom practice.***

7. Who can deliver Component A trainings?

***Answer – Component A training is coordinated by the California Department of Education (CDE) and can be provided only by CDE-sponsored trainers.***

8. Do college instructors being trained on the California Department of Education resources as part of the Faculty Initiative Project qualify to conduct the trainings for Component A?

***Answer – No. Only CDE-approved providers may perform the training. Please visit the California Department of Education, Child Development Division at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/> for additional information on CDE-sponsored trainings.***

9. Where and when will 21 hours of CDE-sponsored trainings be held?

***Answer – The CDE is responsible for planning and scheduling these trainings. Please visit the California Department of Education, Child Development Division at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/> for additional information on CDE-sponsored trainings.***

10. Is there a cost for the CDE-sponsored trainings?

***Answer – There may be costs for training. For information regarding specific costs or fees associated with CDE-sponsored training, please refer to the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/>.***

11. What will happen if allowable Component A trainings or types of trainers are too limited and there are not enough spaces for participants?

***Answer – First 5 California is working with CDE to increase capacity for training. Local First 5 Commissions can also pay for additional training to meet CARES Plus participant needs.***

12. Can a scholarship distributed by a college to a participant be used as the required “stipend?”

***Answer – No. A scholarship cannot be used as a stipend.***

13. How many hours are required for Web-based second hand smoking training?

***Answer – The web-based second hand smoking training is under development. Please check the First 5 California Web site for updates on this program requirement.***

14. The RFA indicates that there are exceptions for Migrant programs. What types of exceptions are envisioned and what is allowable?

***Answer – The exception we refer to is scheduling. Some Migrant programs do not operate on a traditional school year basis. Therefore, the local First 5 CARES Plus programs can accommodate this schedule as appropriate.***

15. Would a local program using college advisors rather than participant Professional Growth Advisors need to select Component C or is there an advantage to selecting Component C?

***Answer – No. If a local program uses local advisors, there is no need to select Component C. This program element is continuing from the original CARES program.***

16. Will former CARES participants who have continued to take ECE classes be eligible to receive stipends for previously completed courses?

***Answer – No. Stipends will not be offered for coursework or training completed by participants in any previous fiscal year.***

17. Does Looking at CLASSrooms (LAC) need to be completed by Fall 2011?

***Answer – No. Each user will be given a license to complete LAC during Year 1 or Year 2 of CARES Plus implementation.***

18. How do we get providers licensed by the second year of participation when licensing is not issuing any new licenses?

***Answer – This is a capacity issue. Participants must meet minimum requirements or they are ineligible for CARES Plus program participation.***

19. How will the Introduction to CLASS (4- to 6-hour training) and Looking at CLASSrooms be delivered?

***Answer – Introduction to CLASS and Looking at CLASSrooms are Web-based trainings.***

20. Do all applicants have to work directly with children or can they be supervisors of those who work directly with children?

***Answer – CARES Plus participants may work directly with children or indirectly in a childcare/preschool facility.***

## **GENERAL**

1. How many copies of the application are required for submission on January 18, 2011?

***Answer – A total of five copies are required: one electronic copy and four hard copies (one hard copy must be an original document with original signatures).***